What is said

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I. Levels of meaning

Anyone who has reflected on the sentence meaning/utterance meaning distinction knows that a simple distinction is in fact insufficient. Two equally important distinctions must be made.

• First, there is the distinction between the linguistic meaning of a sentence-type, and what is said (the proposition expressed) by an utterance of the sentence. For example, the English sentence 'I am French' has a certain meaning which, *qua* meaning of a sentence-type, is not affected by changes in the context of utterance. This context-independent meaning contrasts with the context-dependent propositions which the sentence expresses with respect to particular contexts. Thus 'I am French', said by me, expresses the proposition that I am French; if you utter the sentence, it expresses a different proposition, even though its linguistic meaning remains the same across contexts of use.

• Second, we have the distinction between what is actually said and what is merely 'conveyed' by the utterance. My utterance of 'I am French' expresses the proposition that I am French, but there are contexts in which it conveys much more. Suppose that, having been asked whether I can cook, I reply: 'I am French'. Clearly my utterance (in this context) provides an affirmative answer to the question. The meaning of the utterance in such a case includes more than what is literally said; it also includes what the utterance 'implicates'.

'What is said' being a term common to both distinctions, we end up with a triad:

sentence meaning
vs.
what is said
vs.
what is implicated.

The distinguishing characteristic of sentence meaning (the linguistic meaning of the sentence-type) is that it is conventional and context-independent. Moreover, in general at least, it falls short of constituting a complete proposition, i.e. something truth-evaluable. In contrast, both 'what is said' and 'what is implicated' are context-dependent and propositional. The difference between 'what is said' and 'what is implicated' is that the former is constrained by sentence meaning in a way in which the implicatures are not. What is said results from fleshing out the meaning of the sentence (which is like a semantic 'skeleton') so as to make it propositional. The propositions one can arrive at through this process of 'fleshing out' are constrained by the skeleton which serves as input to the process. Thus 'I am French' can express an indefinite number of propositions, but the propositions in question all have to be compatible with the semantic potential of the sentence. That is why the English sentence 'I am French' cannot express the proposition that kangaroos have tails. There is no such constraint on the propositions which an utterance of the sentence can communicate through the mechanism of implicature. Given enough background, an utterance of 'I am French' might implicate that kangaroos have tails. What's implicated is implicated by virtue of an inference, and the inference chain can (in principle) be as long and involve as many background assumptions as one wishes.

The basic triad can be mapped back onto the simple sentence meaning/utterance meaning distinction by grouping together two of the three levels. There are two ways to do it, corresponding to two interpretations for the triad. The first interpretation stresses the close connection between sentence meaning and what is said; together, sentence

meaning and what is said constitute the *literal meaning* of the utterance as opposed to what *the speaker* means:

sentence meaning
literal meaning
what is said

vs.

speaker's meaning

The other interpretation stresses the commonality between what is said and what is implicated, both of which are taken to be pragmatically determined:

sentence meaning

vs.

what is said
speaker's meaning
what is implicated

Essential to this interpretation is the claim that 'what is said', though constrained by the meaning of the sentence, is not as tightly constrained as is traditionally thought.

II. Minimalism vs. Maximalism

Minimalism

The first interpretation corresponds to a widespread doctrine which I call pragmatic Minimalism. According to that doctrine, 'what is said' departs from the meaning of the sentence (and incorporates contextual elements) *only when the sentence itself sets up a slot to be contextually filled*. Thus an indexical sentence such as 'He is tall' does not

express a complete proposition unless a referent has been contextually assigned to the demonstrative pronoun 'he', which acts like a free variable in need of contextual instantiation. What I call 'saturation' is the contextual process whereby the meaning of such a sentence is completed and made propositional. Other contextual processes — e.g. the inference process that generates implicatures — are semantically *optional.* They enrich the meaning of the utterance but are not directly triggered by an expression in the sentence, hence they may take place or not according to context. According to Minimalism, those extra constituents of meaning which correspond to nothing in the sentence itself are external to what is said.

As an illustration, consider examples (1) to (3):

(1) I've had breakfast

(2) You are not going to die

(3) The policeman stopped John's car

Arguably, the first sentence, 'I've had breakfast', expresses the proposition that the speaker has had breakfast before the time of utterance — a proposition which, strictly speaking, would be true if the speaker had had breakfast only once, twenty years ago (Sperber and Wilson 1986: 189-90). That is clearly not what the speaker means when she answers the question 'Do you want something to eat' and replies 'I've had breakfast'; she means something much more specific, namely that she's had breakfast *that morning*. This aspect of speaker's meaning, however, has to be construed as external to what is said and as being merely conveyed, in the same way in which the utterer of 'I am French' implies, but does not say, that he is a good cook. That is so because nothing in the sentence itself constrains us to go beyond the 'minimal' interpretation, to the effect that the speaker's life was not entirely breafkastless. Nothing in the sentence itself forces us to bring in the implicit reference to a particular time. (Indeed we can easily imagine contexts in which a speaker would use the same sentence to assert the minimal proposition and nothing more.)

The same thing holds even more clearly for the second example. Kent Bach, to whom it is due, imagines a child crying because of a minor cut and her mother uttering (2) in response. What is meant is: 'You're not going to die from that cut'. But literally the utterance expresses the proposition that the kid will not die *tout court* — as if he or she was immortal. The extra element contextually provided (the implicit reference to the cut) does not correspond to anything in the sentence itself, hence it does not constitute a component of what is said in the minimalist sense. Again, we can easily imagine a context in which the same sentence would be used to communicate the minimal proposition and nothing more.

In the third example, we spontaneously interpret the utterance in a certain way, but if we learnt that the policeman was actually driving John's car in the reported scene we would understand his stopping of the car very differently from the way we understand it when we assume that the policeman is regulating the traffic. Quite different 'manners of stopping' are involved in the two cases. Those implied manners of stopping are part of the way we understand the utterance but they are *additional* aspects of the interpretation, linguistically optional hence external to what is said by minimalist standards. What is said in the minimal sense is only that the policeman stopped the car in some way or other. (This is in contrast to the relation between John and the car: that relation *must* be fixed for the phrase 'John's car' to have a determinate semantic value.)

Maximalism

Opposed to Minimalism is pragmatic *Maximalism*. According to that view, the relevant distinction is not between mandatory and optional contextual processes, but between those that are 'primary' and those that are 'secondary' (Recanati 1993).

Secondary pragmatic processes are inferential processes. They take 'what is said' (or the speaker's saying it) as input and yield further propositions as output. The Gricean reasoning by means of which conversational implicatures are worked out is a typical secondary process. It goes something like this: 'The speaker has said that *p;* he

or she respects the maxims of conversation; therefore, he or she means that *q′*. Clearly, in order to derive the implicit from the explicit in this manner, we need to have first identified the explicit content of the utterance — what is said. It is in saying that *p* that the speaker implies that *q:* implying presupposes saying, hence nothing can be implied unless something has been said, the saying of which carries the relevant implications. — In contrast, *primary* pragmatic processes are contextual processes that help determine what is said, but they do not presuppose that what is said has been already determined. 'Saturation' is a typical primary pragmatic process.

Now I claim that among primary pragmatic processes there are, beside saturation (which is mandatory), optional processes such as 'free enrichment'. (Free enrichment is the optional contextual process which I take to be at work in the interpretation of examples [1]-[3] above). In other words, not all optional processes need to be thought of as secondary, on the model of the Gricean reasoning which yields conversational implicatures. My claim rests on a distinction between two sorts of optional, non-minimalist processes: those that are truly inferential and presuppose that what is said has been previously identified, and others which are more associative. I cannot argue for that distinction here (see Recanati 1995). Let me simply point out that the notion of 'what is said' we need to capture the input to secondary, inferential processes already incorporates contextual elements of the optional variety. In the first two examples above, the speaker implies various things by saying what she does: she implies that she is not hungry, or that the cut is not serious. Those implicatures can be worked out only if the speaker is recognized as expressing the proposition that she's had breakfast *that morning*, or that the child won't die *from that cut*. This shows that there are two competing notions of 'what is said'. One is the minimalist notion — that which is standardly appealed to in semantics. The other is the notion we need to capture the input to the Gricean reasoning — 'what is said' as opposed to what is implied by saying it. That notion of what is said is non-minimalist.

The Availability Principle

There is a further difference between the two notions of what is said. What is said in the maximalist sense corresponds to the intuitive truth-conditions of the utterance, that is, to the content of the statement as the participants in the conversation themselves would gloss it. In contrast, the literal truth-conditions posited as part of the minimalist analysis turn out to be (often) very different from the intuitive truth-conditions which untutored conversational participants would ascribe to the utterance.

According to Maximalism, it is a fact that what is said, *qua* input to secondary processes, is consciously available. In typical cases of implicature, the participants in the conversational process are aware of what is said, of what is implied by saying it, and they are capable of working out the connection between them. That fact is easy to account for if one accepts what we may call the Pragmatic View: the view that 'saying' is a variety of nonnatural meaning in Grice's sense (Grice 1957, 1989). That view entails that what is said *must* be available — it must be open to public view. (That is so because nonnatural meaning is essentially a matter of intention-recognition.) Hence my 'Availability Principle', according to which 'what is said' must be analysed in conformity to the intuitions shared by those who fully understand the utterance — typically the speaker and the hearer, in a normal conversational setting. This in turn supports the claim that the optional elements I mentioned above (e.g. the reference to a particular time in 'I've had breakfast') are indeed constitutive of what is said, despite their optional character. For if we substract those elements, the resulting proposition no longer corresponds to the intuitive truth-conditions of the utterance.

The four-level picture

The conflict between Minimalism and Maximalism is not irreducible. An intermediate position is available, according to which *there are two equally legitimate notions of what is said:* a purely semantic, minimalist notion, and a pragmatic notion ('what is stated' as opposed to what is implied). If we accept this suggestion, we end up with four levels instead of three:

literal	• Sentence meaning (character)
meaning	• what is $said_{min}$
vs.	
speaker's	• what is $said_{max}$
meaning	• what is implicated

Such a compromise would seem to be acceptable to both the minimalist and the maximalist. The minimalist wants to isolate a purely semantic notion of content, that is, a notion of the content of a sentence (with respect to a context) which is compositionally determined and takes pragmatic elements on board only when this is necessary. The maximalist wants to capture the intuitive notion of 'what is said' (as opposed to what is implied) and stresses that what is said in that sense is, to a large extent, determined in a top down manner by the context. The two notions can be integrated within a unified framework if one accepts to replace the traditional triad by a four-level picture.

Salmon and Bach on what is said

In 'The Pragmatic Fallacy', Nathan Salmon distinguishes two senses of the phrase 'what is said': what is said in the strict and philosophical sense (the semantic content of the

sentence, with respect to the context at hand) and what is said in the loose and popular sense (the content of the speaker's speech act). What is said in the loose and popular sense is typically richer than the sentence's semantic content, yet it does not encompass what the speaker merely conveys or implicates in Grice's sense. Salmon, in effect, draws a threefold distinction between (i) what is said in the minimalist sense (the semantic content of the sentence, in the speaker's context), (ii) what the speaker asserts, and (iii) what he or she implies. When the conventional meaning of the sentence-type is added, this yields something very much like the four-level picture above.

Kent Bach defends a similar view, with one more level (Bach 1994a, 1994b). 'What is said' is so minimal, in Bach's conception, that it need not even be propositional. It may be a 'propositional radical'. Thus if I say 'Tipper is ready' what I say is *that Tipper is ready*. This becomes a full-fledged proposition only if an answer is provided to the question: ready for what? A pragmatic process of 'completion' must therefore take place to make the Bachian 'what is said' into a complete proposition. To go from that proposition (resulting from completion) to what is actually asserted a further pragmatic process of *expansion* often comes into play. That process is clearly non-minimalist: it is neither triggered by a linguistic constituent, nor necessary in order to achieve propositionality. So in Bach's framework there are five distinct notions: the sentence's linguistic meaning; what is said in the less-than-minimal sense; the minimal proposition resulting from completion; the non-minimal proposition resulting from expansion; and, finally, the conversational implicatures of the utterance (not to mention what the speaker nonliteraly communicates). The contextual components of meaning generated through completion and expansion are called by Bach 'conversational implicitures' because they are 'implicit in' what is said, in contrast to the implicatures which are 'implied by' the what is said (or the saying of it).

Whatever we think of the details of Bach's and Salmon's views, it is clear that, by freeing us of the limitations of the traditional three-level picture, they make a reconciliation of Minimalism and Maximalism possible. One can be a minimalist with

respect to what is said in the strict and literal sense, and at the same time a maximalist when it comes to what the speaker asserts.

Trouble with the syncretic view

The syncretic view promises to give us the best of both worlds. It is attractive and sounds reasonable. As Jonathan Berg pointed out, I myself have proposed something along similar lines (Berg 1998: 466-7). Yet I think one must be cautious in one's advocacy of that view.

The weak point in the syncretic view is the very notion of 'what is said in the strict and literal sense', i.e. the minimalist notion of what is said. How are we to understand that notion? A natural and widespread interpretation runs as follows: 'What is said' in the minimalist sense is what *the sentence* says (with respect to the context at hand), as opposed to what *the speaker* says by uttering the sentence. This construal is quite explicit in Salmon's paper. Thus interpreted, however, the syncretic view is closely related to a traditional way of construing the semantics/pragmatics distinction which I think must be rejected. In the next two parts of this paper, I will spell out that conception and show what is wrong with it.

IV. Semantics and pragmatics: the standard picture

Two kinds of interpretation

On the standard picture, knowing a language is like knowing a theory by means of which one can deductively establish the truth-conditions of (or the proposition expressed by) sentences which one has never encountered before. *Semantic interpretation* is the process whereby an interpreter exploits his or her knowledge of a language, say L, to assign to an arbitrary sentence of L its truth-conditions.

Pragmatic interpretation is a totally different process. It is not concerned with language per se, but with human action. When someone acts, there is a reason why he does what he does. To provide an interpretation for the action is to find that reason, that is, to ascribe the agent a particular intention in terms of which we can make sense of the action.

Pragmatic interpretation is possible only if we presuppose that the agent is rational. That presupposition is encapsulated in the very notion of an action. To interpret an action, we have to make hypotheses concerning the agent's beliefs and desires; hypotheses in virtue of which it can be deemed rational for the agent to behave as she does.

A distinguishing characteristic of pragmatic interpretation is its defeasability. The best explanation we can offer for an action given the available evidence may be revised in the light of new evidence. Even if an *excellent* explanation is available, it can always be overriden if enough new evidence is adduced to account for the subject's behaviour. It follows that any piece of evidence may turn out to be relevant for the interpretation of an action. In other words, there is no limit to the amount of contextual information that can affect pragmatic interpretation.

Pragmatic interpretation of linguistic behaviour

A particular class of human actions is that of communicative actions. That class is defined by the fact that the intention underlying the action is a *communicative* intention — an intention such that (arguably) its recognition by the addressee is a necessary and sufficient condition for its fulfilment. To communicate that *p* is therefore to act in such a way that the addressee will explain one's action by ascribing to the agent the intention to communicate that *p*. For communication to succeed, the addressee must not only understand *that* the agent does what he does in order to communicate something to her; she must also understand *what* the agent tries to communicate. To secure that effect the communicator will do something which will evoke in the adressee's mind that which he

wants to communicate. To that purpose the communicator may use icons, or indices, or symbols, that is, conventional signs. It is, of course, symbols that are used when the communicator and the addressee share a common language.

At this point semantic interpretation and pragmatic interpretation make contact with each other. A speech act is an action performed by uttering a sentence in some language, say L. Let us assume that the sentence has a certain semantic interpretation in L: it means that *p*. Since the speaker utters a sentence which means that *p* and manifests the intention to communicate something to the hearer, one reasonable hypothesis is that he intends to communicate that *p*. If that is the best explanation for the action given the available evidence, the hearer will settle for it and (if that was indeed the speaker's intention) the communicative intention will be fulfilled: the speaker will have succeedeed in communicating that *p* to the hearer. In this case the speech act will be assigned a particular content as a result of pragmatic interpretation; and that content will coincide with the content which comes to be assigned to the sentence as a result of semantic interpretation. That is not really a coincidence, of course; for the semantic interpretation of the sentence was part of the evidence used in pragmatically determining the content of the speech act. But there are cases in which the two contents do not coincide: the sentence means that *p,* but that is not what the speaker means — what he manifestly intends to communicate.

Two notions of what is said

So far I have expounded the standard picture of the relation between semantic and pragmatic interpretation. I will criticize it shortly (Part V). Before doing so, let me spell out the connection between that picture and the syncretic view talked about in the third part of this paper.

On the standard picture, as we have just seen, there is a basic distinction between what the sentence says and what the speaker means, even when they coincide. *What the sentence says* is determined by semantic interpretation, that is, deductively

and without paying any regard to the speaker's beliefs and desires. Of course, one needs to make sure that the speaker utters what he does as a sentence of L; and that may require a good deal of pragmatic interpretation. But once it is determined that the utterance at issue counts as an utterance of a particular sentence of L, semantic interpretation takes over, and the content of that sentence is mechanically determined.— On the other hand *what the speaker means* is determined by pragmatic interpretation. It relies on a general assessment of the speaker's beliefs and desires, given an overall assumption of rationality. As I pointed out any piece of contextual information may turn out to be relevant to establishing the correct interpretation for the speech act.

In this framework there is room for the notion of *what the speaker says* — what is said in the pragmatic sense, or, as Bach puts it, 'what is stated'. Sometimes we can distinguish two components within what the speaker means: what he states, and what he implies in virtue of stating it. What is stated may, but need not, be identical to what the sentence says. Often what is stated is richer than what the sentence says, as we have seen. Be that as it may, there are two notions of what is said: one is the output of semantic interpretation. It is what the sentence says. The other is a particular aspect of speaker's meaning. It is what the speaker states. That distinction is the core of the syncretic view.

V. Semantic indeterminacy

Wide and narrow context

I think there is something deeply wrong with the standard picture (and the syncretic view insofar as it is based on it). What is wrong is the assumption that semantic interpretation can deliver something as determinate as a complete proposition. On my view semantic interpretation, characterized by its deductive character, does not deliver

complete propositions: it delivers only semantic schemata — propositional functions, to use Russell's phrase.

By saying that semantic interpretation properly conceived delivers only schemata, not complete propositions, I do not mean that it delivers only characters in Kaplan's sense (Kaplan 1989). When a sentence contains an indexical, like 'I' or 'tomorrow', the meaning of the indexical (its character) contextually determines its content in a very straightforward manner. There is no reason not to consider that aspect of content-determination as part of semantic interpretation. For the type of context-dependence exhibited by (pure) indexicals has nothing to do with the radical form of context-dependence which affects speaker's meaning. The hallmark of the more radical form of context-dependence is the fact that any piece of contextual information may be relevant. But the context that comes into play in the semantic interpretation of indexicals is not the total pragmatic context; it is a very limited context which contains only a few aspects of the pragmatic context: who speaks, when, where, and so forth. As Bach puts it,

> There are two quite different sorts of context, and each plays quite a different role. Wide context concerns any contextual information relevant to determining the speaker's intention and to the successful and felicitous performance of the speech act... Narrow context concerns information specifically relevant to determining the semantic values of [indexicals]... Narrow context is semantic, wide context pragmatic.[i]

But most context-sensitive expressions are *semantically indeteminate* rather than indexical in the strict sense. A possessive phrase such as 'John's car' in example (3) above means something like *the car that bears relation R to John*, where R is a free variable. The free variable must be contextually assigned a particular value; but that value is not determined by a rule and it is not a function of a particular aspect of the narrow context. What a given occurrence of the phrase 'John's car' means ultimately depends upon what the speaker who utters it means. It therefore depends upon the wide context. That is true of all semantically indeterminate expressions: their semantic value

varies from occurrence to occurrence, just as the semantic value of indexicals does, yet it varies not as a function of some objective feature of the narrow context but as a function of what the speaker means. It follows that semantic interpretation by itself cannot determine what is said by a sentence containing such an expression: for the semantic value of the expression — its own contribution to what is said — is a matter of speaker's meaning, and can only be determined by pragmatic interpretation.

Indexicals and semantic indeterminacy

Even if we restrict our attention to expressions traditionally classified as indexicals, we see that they involve a good deal of semantic indeterminacy. This is true, in particular, of demonstratives. The reference of a demonstrative cannot be determined by a rule, like the rule that 'I' refers to the speaker. It is generally assumed that there is such a rule, namely the rule that the demonstrative refers to the object which happens to be demonstrated or which happens to be the most salient, in the context at hand. But the notions of 'demonstration' and 'salience' are pragmatic notions in disguise. They cannot be cashed out in terms merely of the narrow context. Ultimately, a demonstrative refers to *what the speaker who uses it refers to by using it*.

To be sure, one can make that into a semantic rule. One can say that the character of a demonstrative is the rule that it refers to what the speaker intends to refer to. As a result, one will add to the narrow context a sequence of 'speaker's intended referents', in such a way that the n^{th} demonstrative in the sentence will refer to the n^{th} member of the sequence. Formally that is fine, but philosophically it is clear that one is cheating. We pretend that we can manage with a limited, narrow notion of context of the sort we need for handling indexicals, while in fact we can only determine the speaker's intended referent (hence the semantic referent, which depends upon the speaker's intended referent) by resorting to pragmatic interpretation and relying on the *wide* context.[ii]

We encounter the same sort of problem even with expressions like 'here' and 'now' which are traditionally considered as *pure* indexicals (rather than demonstratives). Their semantic value is the time or place of the context respectively. But what counts as the time and place of the context? How inclusive must the time or place in question be? It depends on what the speaker means, hence, again, on the wide context. We can maintain that the character of 'here' and 'now' is the rule that the expression refers to 'the' time or 'the' place of the context — a rule which automatically determines a content, given a (narrow) context in which the time and place parameters are given specific values; but then we have to let a pragmatic process take place to fix the values in question, that is, to determine *which* narrow context, among indefinitely many candidates compatible with the facts of the utterance, serves as argument to the character function. On the resulting view the (narrow) context with respect to which an utterance is interpreted is not *given*, it is not determined automatically by objective facts like where and when the utterance takes place, but it is determined by the speaker's intention and the wide context. Again, we reach the conclusion that pragmatic interpretation has a role to play in determining the content of the utterance, in such a case.

Semantic indeterminacy generalized

To sum up, either semantic interpretation delivers something gappy, and pragmatic interpretation must fill the gaps until we reach a complete proposition. Or we run semantic interpretation only after we have used pragmatic interpretation to pre-determine the values of semantically indeterminate expressions, which values we artificially feed into the narrow context. Either way, semantic interpretation by itself is powerless to determine what is said, when the sentence contains a semantically indeterminate expression.

Now I take it that such expressions can be found all over the place. Moreover, semantic indeterminacy is not limited to particular lexical items. One can follow

Waismann and argue that the satisfaction conditions of any empirical predicate are semantically indeterminate and subject to pragmatic interpretation. There is also constructional indeterminacy. For example consider something as simple as the Adjective+Noun construction, as in 'red pen'. What counts as a red pen? A pen that is red. But when does a pen count as red? That depends upon the wide context. The satisfaction conditions of 'red pen' can only be determined by pragmatic interpretation. (Of course there are default interpretations; but they can be overriden and I think that establishes their essentially pragmatic nature.)

Suppose I am right and most sentences, perhaps all, are semantically indeterminate. What follows? That there is no such thing as 'what the sentence says' (in the standard sense in which that phrase is generally used). There is a single notion of what is said, and that is a pragmatic notion: saying, as Grice claimed, is a variety of non-natural meaning, characterized by the role which the conventional meaning of the sentence plays in the hearer's intended recognition of the speaker's communicative intention. Roughly, what is said is that part of speaker's meaning which falls within the semantic potential of the sentence and is crucially intended to be recognized as falling within that potential.[iii]

If that is right, then we cannot sever the link between what is said and the speaker's publicly recognizable intentions. We cannot consider that something has been said, if the speech participants themselves, though they understand the utterance, are not aware that *that* has been said. This means that we must accept the Availability Principle and its maximalist consequences.

VI. Rescuing the minimal proposition?

My conclusion should not be overstated. I am not saying that the syncretic view cannot be made sense of, only that a particular interpretation (the standard interpretation) must be rejected. There is, I claimed, no purely semantic notion of 'what is said'. We can still define a minimal notion of what it said if we want to, but we shall have to do it *in*

terms of the pragmatic notion. What is said in the minimal sense can thus be defined as what is said in the full-fledged, pragmatic sense *minus* the unarticulated constituents resulting from free enrichment. (That is a first approximation. The definition will have to be modified to take account of optional processes other than free enrichment. In order to get what is said in the minimal sense, we must abstract from *all* the aspects of meaning which result from optional, non-minimalist processes.)

That minimal notion of what is said is an abstraction with no psychological reality, because of the holistic nature of speaker's meaning. From a psychological point of view, we cannot separate those aspects of speaker's meaning which fill gaps in the representation associated with the sentence as a result of purely semantic interpretation, and those aspects of speaker's meaning which are optional and enrich or otherwise modify the representation in question. They are indissociable, mutually dependent aspects of a single process of pragmatic interpretation.

In a former article I attempted to show that saturation sometimes depends upon, and presupposes, optional processes like free enrichment or transfer (Recanati 1995). The example I gave was the possessive phrase 'the lion's sword', in a context in which there are two available interpretations for the word 'lion', namely a literal interpretation in which it denotes an animal, and a nonliteral, metonymical interpretation in which 'lion' is used to denote a warrior with a lion painted on his shield. (In the imagined context, there were both a real lion *and* a warrior with a lion painted on his shield.) Depending on which interpretation is given of the word 'lion' the genitive itself will be interpreted differently: *if*, as I assumed in setting up the example, the description 'the lion' is used to talk about the warrior, *then* 'the lion's sword' will be understood as meaning something like *the sword which that warrior used during the fight*. That is an instance of saturation: in context, we give a particular value to the free variable R carried by the genitive. Here a crucial aspect of the (wide) context is the nonliteral interpretation which is assigned to 'the lion'. If we changed the context by reverting to the literal interpretation of 'lion', that would affect the process of saturation by ruling out that interpretation of R. Another value would be assigned to R if the utterance was

understood as being about the animal: the lion's sword would then be the sword which killed the lion.

What *is* the minimal proposition expressed by the utterance, on the intended (i.e. nonliteral) interpretation of the lion example? To get the minimal proposition, we must give the word 'lion' its *literal* interpretation, because the nonliteral interpretation results from an optional, non-minimalist process; and we must assign a particular value to the variable R carried by the genitive. Which value? Well, the value which corresponds to what the speaker actually means, i.e. that which goes together with the intended *non*literal interpretation of 'lion'. The result is a monster: what the phrase 'the lion's sword' contributes to what is said in the minimalist sense is something like *the sword which the lion (the animal) used during the fight.* The minimal proposition thus determined is absurd and evidently corresponds to no stage in the actual process of understanding the utterance.

The minimal notion of what is said can (perhaps) still be useful for theoretical purposes. Let the semanticist use it if he or she wants to, provided he or she agrees that

(i) the minimal proposition thus posited as the semantic content of the utterance is not 'what the sentence says' in the objectionable sense glossed in Part IV and criticized in Part V. It is not autonomously determined by the rules of the language independent of speaker's meaning. At the same time,

(ii) the minimal proposition has no psychological reality. It does not correspond to any stage in the process of understanding the utterance, and need not be entertained or represented at any point in that process.

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symposiasts Manuel Garcia-Carpintero and Ken Taylor, and to Joseph Almog, Jonathan Berg, Pierre Jacob, David Kaplan, and Marco Santambrogio, for discussions which had an impact on the paper.

[i] This quotation comes from the handout of a talk on 'Semantics vs Pragmatics', delivered in 1996. In the published version of the paper, the passage got expanded into the following:

"There are two sorts of contextual information, one much more restricted in scope and limited in role than the other. Information that plays the limited role of combining with linguistic information to determine content (in the sense of fixing it) is restricted to a short list of variables, such as the identity of the speaker and the hearer and the time and place of an utterance. Contextual information in the broad sense is anything that the hearer is to take into account to determine (in the sense of ascertain) the speaker's communicative intention. It is often said that what a speaker means 'depends on context,' is 'determined by context' or is 'a matter of context,' but this is not narrow context in the semantically relevant sense discussed above. When it is said that 'Context makes it clear that ...,' what is meant is that there are items of information that the hearer can reasonably suppose the speaker to have intended him to take into account to determine what the speaker means. In this broad, pragmatic sense, which is also relevant to whether the speech act is being performed successfully and felicitiously, context does not literally determine content." (Bach 1997: 39)

[ii] One may acknowledge the need to appeal to the wide context in interpreting demonstratives while arguing that the appeal thus made is 'pre-semantic'. The speaker's directing intention is necessary to endow a demonstrative with a character in the first place, one might say. We need the wide context to fix the expression's character, but once the character is thus determined, through a pragmatic procedure akin to disambiguation, it maps the narrow context onto the proposition expressed by the utterance in that context. Similarly, we might say that whenever there is semantic

indeterminacy, some form of pragmatic disambiguation must take place before the process of semantic interpretation can start. — To argue in this way, it seems to me, *is* to acknowledge that semantic interpretation by itself cannot determine the content of a sentence containing a semantically indeterminate expression.

[iii] Complications arise when the speaker 'does not mean what he says', as in irony. Such cases apparently show that what is said *cannot* be defined in terms of speaker's meaning. Faced with that problem, Grice suggests that the speaker only "makes as if to say" what, clearly, he does not assert. Alternatively, one may elaborate the pragmatic notion of what is said (characterized in terms of speaker's meaning) in such a way that the speaker who ironically 'says that *p*' really says that *p*. On this view, even though saying is a pragmatic matter (a matter of speaker's meaning), still one can say something without actually asserting it. The standard contrast between the semantic notion of saying and the pragmatic notion of asserting is replaced by a contrast between *two pragmatic notions:* the 'locutionary' notion of saying and the 'illocutionary' notion of asserting (Austin 1975; Recanati 1988).

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